

Measuring Up 2002

Measuring Up 2000, the state-by-state report card on higher education published by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, assigned grades to states in five areas: preparation, participation, affordability, completion, and benefits. All states received a grade of “incomplete” in the sixth category, student learning. The NCPPHE staff stressed the importance of assessing student learning but found that states lacked information on the educational performance of college students that would allow for systematic comparisons.

Since the release of the report card, the staff at the National Center has been working to identify sources of data that will permit assessments of academic achievement at state and national levels. Kentucky is extensively involved in these efforts. Sue Hodges Moore serves on a National Center advisory committee overseeing preparations for *Measuring Up 2002*, the next edition of the report card. Kentucky has been designated a demonstration state for its efforts to “unpack” the report card: turning the five letter grades into instruments of public policy. The data are being broken down from the aggregate state level to look at individual institutions and regions of the state.

Kentucky was recently asked to be a model state for the student learning component of *Measuring Up 2002*. Because of the key indicator system, Kentucky is farther along than most other states in collecting the right kinds of information. Members of the council staff met with the staff from the National Center and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems in April to begin to construct a student learning measurement from the data available for Kentucky and to consider the feasibility of expanding the range of information collected. The 2002 report card will include a chapter that features the work being done in Kentucky. From 2002 to 2004, Kentucky will be one of six or seven pilot states to administer common surveys and exams and bring together test scores and pass rates identified by the states and the National Center.

The council staff is working with the National Center and the Kentucky postsecondary institutions to collect the data necessary to proceed with this important work. Much of this information has been gathered previously in support of key indicators and other projects, including licensure and certification pass rates and results from the National Survey of Student Engagement and the National Assessment of Adult Literacy. Collection of additional data integral to this project will require an expanded commitment on the part of the council and the institutions. These data include results from graduate entrance exams, Work Keys assessments, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and a nationally referenced alumni satisfaction survey.

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